2:Lewis E-5 (1943-1948) 1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

agreeable to settling the issue and offered to sell the land titles back to Tepoztlán. A wealthy Tepoztecan, Vicente Gómez, offered to lend the money to the municipio for the purchase of the titles. This man later became a leading *cacique* in the village and controlled the local government. In an attempt to recover his loan, he levied heavy taxes on each sack of charcoal produced by Tepoztecans. A group of villagers finally assassinated him.

The land titles were again lost between 1900 and 1905 when a local priest sold to an outsider the land titles and other important documents kept in the archives of the convent.[8] A few years later the village had to buy them back at a high price. This occurred again in 1925 when the municipio paid 800 pesos to buy back its land titles from a non-Tepoztecan woman into whose hands they had fallen.

Judging from the early documents, there was little change in the system of communal landholdings during the entire colonial period. The only references of significance show that as early as 1567 Cortés had rented some Tepoztecan lands to the operator of his Hacienda of Tlaltenango and also to some Tepoztecans. Presumably Cortés was using communal lands for this purpose. The first great change in the system of landholdings occurred after the Revolution of 1857 when most of the communal lands held by the church were taken over by some of the leading families of the village as private property. After this time Tepoztecans could petition the local authorities for title to some of the communal lands.

One occasion for a fairly large distribution of communal lands to individual Tepoztecans occurred in the late 1890's as a result of an attempt of the Hacienda of Oacalco to grab some of the Tepoztecan lands. To present a stronger legal claim, the local authorities encouraged Tepoztecans to file claims for individual plots of land in the area which was being threatened, so that individual court actions could be lodged against the hacienda if the lands were taken. The private owners of the said lands backed up their newly acquired claims by force of arms, and managed to keep the lands for Tepoztlán. However, despite the Reform Laws of 1857, most of the communal lands of Tepoztlán remained intact and were not converted into private property.

Although the municipio of Tepoztlán held on to most of its communal lands, these lands were under the control of the local *caciques* and, therefore, were not always available to the landless Tepoztecans. Before the Revolution of 1910–20, the *caciques*, with the support of state and federal authorities, prohibited the villagers from using the communal lands in order to assure a cheap labor supply for themselves. One of the most important effects of the Revolution upon Tepoztlán was that the communal lands of the municipio became open to all Tepoztecans.

Another important change in the status of the communal lands occurred shortly after the Revolution as a result of the National Ejido Program. On April 24, 1921, a group of Tepoztecans, led by members of the colony of Tepoztecans in Mexico

[8] Manuel Miranda y Marrón, "Una Excursión a Tepoztlán," *Société Scientifique*, Bk. 23 (1905–06), pp. 22-23.